

A N
ANTIDOTE
A G A I N S T
Some Principal Errors
O F T H E
Predestinarians.

A Work designed for the In-
formation of the Common
People.

*Beloved, believe not every Spirit, but
try the Spirits whether they are of
God; for many false Prophets are
gone out into the World, 1 Joh.4.1.*

L O N D O N,
Printed for Richard Cumberland at the
Angel in St. Paul's Church-Yard,
1696.

*An ANTIDOTE against some
Principal Errors, &c.*

TO convince those of their Mistake who err in Matters of Religion, is an Act of the greatest Kindness and Friendship that one Man can do unto another: being therefore fully satisfied in my self, that some of the Predestinarian Principles are contrary to Truth. I thought it my Duty to endeavour all that in me lies, to convince them thereof, who so believe, by shewing that they do not rightly understand the true Intent and Meaning of the Word of God; or, that *they err, not knowing the Scriptures*, Mat. 22. 29. that is to say, not knowing them rightly: for they rely only upon here and there a Place that seems to make for them; and in the mean time overlook a far greater Number of Scriptures that very plainly and clearly do testify against them.

Now 'tis evident that where one Part of Scripture seems to declare one thing, and another part seems to declare quite the contrary; 'tis evident, I say, that there the true sense of one Part is not that which the literal Import of the Words does exprefs: for 'tis certain that two Senses which

do oppose each other, cannot both be true ; in such Cases then it must be that the literal Sense of one part is the true Sense, and then the literal Sense of the other part must be mystical, figurative or allusive, or such as does seem to speak one thing, but does really mean and intend another. Now 'tis not possible for any Opinion to be true, that is built on the literal Sense of such Scriptures as these, whose right meaning is not that which the Words do at first sight seem to express.

Wherefore before we presume to make any Text the Foundation of our Faith, we must be sure that the Sense which we take that Text of Scripture in, is its true and right Sense. And the way to know this, is to consider first, whether it be agreeable to that Sense which is found to be the Common Drift and Scope of the Bible : for we must not understand any one Scripture in such a Sense as is contrary to a far greater Number of Places. The general Sense of the Scriptures is rather to be relied on, than a particular Sense of only three or four Places. Again, we must consider whether the Sense a Scripture is taken in be agreeable to Reason ; for no Sense of Scripture can be true that is contrary to the common and natural Notions of our Minds : for the Law of Nature is as much from God as the Laws of Revelation are ; and 'tis absurd to think that one part of God's Law can contradict another. Again, no Sense of Scripture can be the true Sense, if it any ways naturally tend to take Men off from

Some Principal Errors.

5

from the Care of holy Living, by nourishing in them foolish Presumption, or else driving of them into miserable and deep Despair.

Now if these few Particulars be well considered, they cannot but direct us to the Knowledge of the true and right Sense of the Scripture: for if any Sense be the true Sense, it must be that which is agreeable to the greatest Number of Scripture-Testimonies, which we have no reason to disbelieve, and which has no Tendency in it to favour Wickedness, but is every way proper to urge and press Mankind to a Life of Piety and Vertue. Now 'tis evident that the Predestinarians do build many of their Notions on Scriptures taken in that Sense, which is opposite to the Sense of a far greater Number of Testimonies which declare the contrary; and they are also taken in such a Sense as is contrary to all other Evidences of Truth deducible from humane Understanding, and which makes many Men falsely conceit themselves to be the Beloved of God, and his Elect, even in the midst of their Wickedness; and that has driven others into Despair upon a Supposition that they are of that Number whom God, as they think, has eternally reprobated. All which clearly prove that the Sense they take these Scriptures in, is a Sense that is not the right and true Sense; and therefore that Faith is an erroneous Faith which they do build upon it. And this by the Divine Assistance I will make evident in several Particulars: And first,

Of REPROBATION.

The true Substance of the Calvinist Notion concerning Reprobation is, that God has decreed from Eternity to reprobate or torment some Men in Hell for ever, that thereby he may make manifest the Glory of his Justice in punishing some, as well as his Goodnets in making others happy: and they say, that the Number of those who are thus fore-ordained to everlasting Death, is so certain, and their Fate is so unchangeable upon the Account of this his unalterable Decree, that they can neither be increased nor diminished. But this Notion is contrary both to Scripture and Reason, and is therefore both a false and an impious Opinion.

First, 'Tis contrary to Scripture, I mean such Scriptures as are much more numerous, and more plain and easy to be understood, than those are upon which this fictionary Faith is founded. *God is Love,* 1 Joh. 4. 8. *And in this was his Love manifested, in that he sent his only begotten Son into the World, that we might live through him,* ver. 9. *Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no Pleasure in the Death of the Wicked, but that the Wicked turn from his Way and live: turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die, O House of Israel? Ezek. 33. 11. Have I any Pleasure at all that the Wicked should die, saith the Lord God, and not that he should turn from his Ways and live? Ezek. 18. 23. I have*

some Principal Errors.

7

have no Pleasure in the Death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God; wherefore turn your selves, and live ye, Ezek. 18. 32. Now what can be more absurd and contrary to Scripture than to assert, that he who takes no Pleasure in the Death of Sinners, should for his own meer Will and Pleasure, only to shew his Power, decree to torment and damn the greatest part of Mankind? If he swears that he delights not in their Death, we may depend upon his Word notwithstanding all the Arguments which the Predestinarians can urge to the contrary.

'Tis likewise recorded for a Truth, that *the Lord is good to all, and that his tender Mercies are over all his Works, Psal. 145. 9.* That he is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to Repentance, *2 Pet. 3. 9.* That his Will is, that *Supplications, Prayers, Intercessions, and giving of Thanks be made for all Men—for this is good and acceptable in the Sight of God, who will have all Men to be saved, and to come to the Knowledge of the Truth, 1 Tim. 2. 1, 4.* And that the Grace of God that brings Salvation, hath appeared unto all Men, *Tit 2. 11.* That Christ is a Propitiation for the Sins of the whole World, *1 Joh. 2. 2.* That he gave himself a Ransom for all, *1 Tim. 2. 6.* That he tasted Death for every Man, *Heb. 2. 9.* And that as by the Offence of one, Judgment came upon all Men to Condemnation; even so by the Righteousness of one, the free Gift came upon all Men to Justification of Life, *Rom. 5. 18.*

Now from these plain Scriptures 'tis evident, that no particular Man's Damnation is unavoidably decreed by God : If Men die the Death eternal, their Destruction is from themselves, and not from him. When he made the Generations of Men to dwell upon the Face of the Earth, he made them free Agents, that is to say, he gave them a Power either to do, or not to do, what he did intend to command them : but withal he let them know, that if they did disobey, they should be punished for their so doing ; and that if they did obey, they should for ever be blessed. It was not his purpose therefore to damn any Man absolutely, but conditionally, in case he should so far abuse the Powers he had given him, as wilfully to commit Sin when he might as well have forborn it. Now the Truth of this is evident from many plain and undeniable Testimonies.

For eternal Punishments are only denounc'd against Men in Case of Wickedness. God's Decrees are, that *the Soul that sins shall die*, Ezek. 18. 4. And that *all should be damned who believe not the Truth, but had Pleasure in Unrighteousness*, 2 Thess. 2. 12. And that if Men *live after the Flesh, they shall die ; but if on the contrary they through the Spirit do mortify the Deeds of the Body, they shall live*, Rom. 8. 13. And therefore he saith, *Whosoever sinneth against me, him will I blot out of my Book*, Exod. 32. 33. By the Sins and Wickednesses then which Men commit, they make themselves Reprobates ; 'tis be-
cause

some Principal Errors.

9

cause of these things, says S. Paul, that the Wrath of God cometh upon the Children of Disobedience, Eph. 5. 3. 6. God hath sworn that some shall not enter into his Rest: But to whom swear he that they should not enter into his Rest, but to them that believe not? Heb. 3. 18. All which shews that God reprobates none but such as by Sin are the Authors of their own Damnation; and therefore 'tis said of the wicked Jews, O Israel, thou hast destroyed thy self, Hos. 13. 9. To say therefore that God is the chief, and principal or main Cause of Man's eternal Destruction, is a Notion you see which is contrary to Scripture, and is therefore an Error.

'Tis also an Error, because 'tis built upon such a Sense of Scripture as we have all the reason in the World to disbelieve: for that can never be the true Sense of God's Word, which naturally tends to debase the Glory of the Justice and Righteousness of God; but this those Notions do which these Men do build on these mistaken Senses of Scripture: for they tell us, that as God has decreed the End of those whom he has resolv'd to reprobate, so he has also decreed the Means which shall bring them to that End, that is to say, he has decreed that they shall unavoidably be Sinners, that so he may manifest the Rigour of his Justice in punishing them for being wicked. But were this true, it would be so far from exalting, that it would plainly debase the Glory of the Justice of God among Men: for according to all the Notions which we have of
Justice,

Justice, nothing can be more unjust and cruel than first to lay an unavoidable Necessity upon a Man to do ill, that so with a seeming Justice he may be tormented for being wicked. Should one Man do so to another, we should count him unjust in the highest; and *shall Man be more just than God?* Job 4. 17. Then, and then only is the Justice of God glorious, when he punishes Men for wilfully refusing to do that which he has made them sufficiently able by one means or other to perform.

This Reprobating Notion of theirs, does make the Gospel a meer piece of Nonsense: for the Gospel tells us, *that Repentance and Remission of Sins should be preached in Christ's Name to all Nations,* Luke 24. 47. And that God does *command all Men every where to repent,* Acts 17. 30. But all this the Predestinarian Doctrine opposes as an impossible Thing, a useless Precept: for it declares that none of them whom God has decreed to reprobate, can repent, and become good Men; for he has decreed, they say, that those Men shall be Sinners, that so he may bring on them in a way of Justice, that eternal Death to which he has foreappointed and designed them: all which, say they, no Endeavours of theirs can prevent; for the most profound Repentance which they can perform, will never reverse what God has thus doom'd them to by an eternal and irreversible Decree. Which Doctrines are a plain Contradiction to that express Command of God that all should repent.

They

The
all that
in a gr
ed wit
occasio
hard
these d
the De
Man to
to perf
ons of
Men
Damm
more
hard
those,
selves
reprob
conce
not t
On
dictio
more
that
good
ther
8. I
of R
perfw
Life
way
beca

Some Principal Errors.

II

They have been also the dreadful Occasion of all that Horror and Despair which has been found in a great Number of Men who have been afflicted with doubting and troubled Minds, and has occasioned others to entertain in themselves very hard Thoughts of God: for such Notions as these do make God seem worse to some Men than the Devil; for the Devil they know can force no Man to sin, he can only tempt, and endeavour to persuade: but God, according to these Notions of the Predestinarians, does force and compel Men to sin by an absolute Decree, that so the Damnation he has design'd them to, may appear more Just. All which are the occasion of very hard and evil Thoughts concerning God in those, who under Despair are apt to think themselves of the Number of those whom he thus has reprobated: which evil and wicked Surmises concerning God had for ever been prevented, had not these Doctrines been taught in the World.

On the contrary 'tis evident beyond Contradiction, that the opposite Doctrine does much more advance God's Honour, because it teaches that 'tis possible for all Men to repent and become good Men: and *herein*, saith Christ, *is my Father glorified, that ye bear much Fruit*, John 15. 8. It likewise tends more to advance the Interest of Religion, which consists in every Man's being persuaded to live a sober, righteous and godly Life; and it is also a Doctrine which is every way more truly conducive to the good of Souls, because it declares that all Men may be happy
if

if they will but diligently improve that Talent of Grace that God has given them, in order to *the working out of their own Salvation, and the making their own Calling and Election sure.*

'Tis plain to every common Man's Understanding, that those Doctrines which teach according to the Scriptures, that God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to Repentance, 2 Pet. 3. 9. That he would have all Men to be saved, and come to the Knowledge of the Truth, 1 Tim. 2. 4. That the Manifestation of the Spirit is given to every Man to profit withal, 1 Cor. 12. 7. And that by the Improvement of this their Talent they may make themselves fit to enter into their Master's Joy : 'tis evident, I say, that such Doctrines as these do noways tend to God's Dishonour, nor are they injurious to the true Interest of Religion, nor do they any ways endanger the Good of Souls. Nor can any thing be more certain than this, that these, and none but these Doctrines, can yield true Comfort to them, that on the account of Sin are in Disconsolation, because they everywhere and always declare it to be the Will of God, that *if the Wicked will turn away from his Wickedness that he hath committed, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall save his Soul alive : all his Transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him ; in his Righteousness that he hath done he shall live,* Ezek. 18. 21 to 28.

Were

W
that
Paytic
on ;
all th
God's
as we
ness
nal in
what
in so
Crim
God
nity
so hi
uness
not
they
act,
tions
their
belie
centu
say r
nity
these
the l
void
God
live
Crim
felf t

Were the Reprobatarian Doctrine true, then all that profess it are bound to live up to those Particulars that are naturally consequent thereupon; and then it must follow of course, that if all the Actions of Men are fore-determined by God's Decree, and Sin be necessitated in some, as well as Vertue is in others, that then Wickedness ought not to be look'd upon as more criminal in a Reprobate than Thirst or Hunger: for what is unavoidable, may be a Man's Infelicity in some Cases, but not his Sin; for can it be a Crime in any one to do that which it is the Will of God he shall do? If God have decreed from Eternity that some Men shall sin unavoidably, that so his Design of reprobating them may not prove uneffectual; then those that act evil things, are not to be charged with Disobedience, because they act, some say, as God designs they should act, and by consequence, according to these Notions, they are intirely obedient to the Will of their Maker. Wherefore those that pretend to believe these Doctrines, ought not to blame and censure, and punish them for Wickedness, but say rather, that since God has decreed from Eternity whatsoever shall come to pass in time, that these cannot avoid so doing; and therefore 'tis the Duty of all to rest satisfied under the unavoidable Execution of the Divine Decrees of God. Now thus to do would be for Men to live up to the Tenure of those Reprobatarian Doctrines of eternal Predestination which they profess to believe: but yet we don't see this done,
which

which shews that these Dictates of the Spirit of Error are over-powered by those natural Notions of Truth implanted in the Minds of the Predestinarians. Experience shews that they all daily cry out against the Wickedness of Mankind as a thing unsufferable among humane Beings, and they do all that lies in their Power to bring those to Punishment who do such things as are destructive to the general or common Good of Men; which sufficiently demonstrates, that the Predestinarian Faith which they outwardly profess, is undoubtedly contrary to that Divine Law which God by Nature has written in the Heart of Man, and for this reason these Men by their Actions do plainly confute the Faith which they profess; for by this they declare unto the World, that they do not believe that Men are wicked by necessity from God, for then 'twould be inhumane to punish them: but this no Man believes, for they as well as we are verily perswaded that the Punishment of the Wicked is just and necessary, that so by their Example others may be deterred from committing the like Crimes; which shews that all Men do naturally believe that Sin may be avoided; and if Sin, which is the Cause of Damnation, may be avoided, then Damnation, which is only the Effect of Sin, may be avoided too: which proves that the Predestinarian Notion of Reprobation is contrary to the natural, as well as to the revealed Law of God, and for that reason ought to be rejected by all Men, especially by them whose Business it is to perswade all Men

Men to be reconciled unto God, which they can never do, unless they declare that 'tis possible for all to repent.

Of ELECTION.

The Predestinarians tell us, that God by an eternal Decree hath elected or chosen to make some particular Persons happy in a Life eternal, and that none shall be saved but those whom he has thus predestinated unto Glory; in which Predestination, they say no respect was had to any Act of Obedience to be perform'd on Man's Part; for according to these Men, Obedience is only the fruit of their Election, or what necessarily does follow thereupon, and not the Means which makes Men fit for Election or Choice of God. But this is an Error, because contrary to plain Scripture, or the revealed Law of our Maker.

For God has therein fully assured us, that our being in favour with him depends upon our doing well, (see *Gen. 4. 7.*) that is to say, upon our well using those Talents he has entrusted us with, or upon our doing those things that his Word and Law have commanded: and therefore it is that we are bid to *work out our own Salvation with Fear and Trembling, for 'tis God that worketh in us to will and to do*, Phil. 2. 12. The meaning is, that God has made us capable of doing his Will, in order to make us fit Objects for his Love and Favour; and that therefore we ought to work according as he has enabled us,
that

that by so doing we may *make our Calling and Election sure*, 2 Pet. 1. 10. which will not be, unless our own diligent Endeavours do concur with the Assistance of God: and therefore it is that Men are exhorted *not to receive the Grace of God in vain*, 2 Cor. 6. 1.

'Tis plain that *God is no Respector of Persons, but that in every Nation he that feareth him, and worketh Righteousness, is accepted with him*, Acts 10. 35. And accordingly a good and vertuous Life is every where made the necessary Condition of Salvation: *Obey my Voice*, saith God, *and then I will be your God, and ye shall be my People*, Jer. 7. 23. *If thou wilt enter into Life*, saith Christ, *keep the Commandments*, Mat. 19. 17. For as the Psalmist has declared, *He (that is God) hath set apart the Man that is godly for himself*, Psal. 4. 3. In which Words a plain Reason is given why God makes one Man happy, and not another, 'tis the Man that is godly that he sets apart for this Purpose. Hence Christ is said to be *the Author of eternal Salvation to all them that obey him*, Heb. 5. 9. 'Tis only by Obedience that we obtain an Interest in the saving Redemption of Christ; and accordingly his Gospel does declare, that *if through the Spirit (which is given to every Man to profit withal, 1 Cor. 12. 7.) we do mortify the Deeds of the Body, we shall live*, Rom. 8. 13. *If a Man purge himself from these, he shall be a Vessel unto Honour, sanctified and meet for the Master's use*, 2 Tim. 2. 21.

Thus

Thus 'tis evident, that in God's Choosing or Electing he only has respect to them, who by the due Use and Improvement of their common Talent, have made themselves fit for those Joys which he has promised to them that will heartily and sincerely serve him ; the Favours of Election or Choosing to the Happiness of Salvation, are conferr'd on none but those that *have a Right to the Tree of Life*, Rev. 22. 14. by Virtue of those Conditional Promises which God out of his free Grace and Mercy has made to Men. *His Mercy is only on them that fear him throughout all Generations*, Luke 1. 50. *If we confess our Sins* (so as to forsake them) *he is faithful and just to forgive us our Sins*, (according to his Promise) *and to cleanse us from all Unrighteousness*, 1 Joh. 1. 9. Hence 'tis plain that all the well-grounded Hope that Men can have in God's Mercy, does wholly depend upon the Assurance of their having to the utmost of their Power performed those Conditions, upon the Performance of which God has promised to be merciful to Mankind.

It plainly appears from the most general Scope of the Scriptures, that *God in his Electing and Choosing is no Respector of Persons, but of Qualifications*: neither does he reprobate any Man merely because he will do so, but because they do wilfully commit Sin and Wickedness. That God decrees to elect some, and reprobate others, is a most undoubted Truth; and these his Decrees are unalterable in themselves, but yet conditional in respect of them on whom they take place, it

being the standing Law of Heaven, that *if Men live after the Flesh, they shall die*, or that Damnation shall be inflicted in case Men will commit Sin; *but if through the Spirit they mortify the Deeds of the Body, they shall live*, Rom. 8. 13. Here the Terms and Conditions of Happiness or Misery are plainly exprest; these are the Reasons of God's different way of dealing with Mankind; 'tis for this Reason that he loves one Man, and hates another, that is to say, he always loves good Men, and hates the Wicked. *If thou dost well*, saith he to *Cain*, *shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou dost not well, Sin lieth at thy Door*, Gen. 4. 7. These things well considered, are a clear Proof that the Calvinist Notion concerning Election is an Error, and that the contrary Doctrine is the undoubted Truth of God.

For certain I am, that no Man can prove it a Dishonour to God, to say, that in his Electing or Chooſing he does not respect the meer Person of any Man, but the fitness or meetness of Men for the Master's Use; and that in every Nation he that feareth God and worketh Righteousness, is accepted with him: or that he sets apart the Man that is Godly for himself. Neither is the Advancement of Religion any ways hindred by declaring, that God would have all Men to be saved, and come to the Knowledge of the Truth; and that all Men may be saved, if they will but give diligence to make their own Calling and Election sure, and be careful not to grieve the Holy Spirit; or in other Words, not to receive the Grace of God in vain.

vain. Nor can it be any ways injurious to the Good of Souls to tell Men, as Christ hath done, that *if they will enter into Life, they must keep the Commandments* : and that *God commands all Men every where to repent* ; and having repented, to be stedfast and unmoveable in their Resolutions of keeping God's Commands for the future ; and that they study how to abound more and more in the Work of the Lord, *forasmuch as they know that their Labour shall not be in vain in the Lord,* 1 Cor. 15. 58.

This Doctrine is much more futable to the great End and Design of the Gospel (which was to advance among Men the Practice of true Piety and Godliness) than the contrary Doctrine, which teaches that Vertue and Piety do not recommend us to God, who 'tis said does first decree to save, and then does irresistibly sanctify ; Righteousness not being, as the Predeterminians say, the Means of Mens being elected or chosen, but that Election is the Means or Cause of their being made righteous by God. If Men are elected, say they, God will then sanctify them without their own Endeavours, that so the Glory thereof may redound wholly to himself ; which they think could not be, should God make Men capable of doing any thing towards the saving of themselves.

So that the Result of this Opinion is, that if God have elected any Man, he shall (but not by any Endeavour of his own) be made a good Man before he dies ; and that if he be not elect-

ed, all the Endeavours he can use shall never reverse that Decree, to the saving of his Soul: which plainly is no other than a Doctrine proper to encourage a licentious Carelessness in great numbers of unthinking Men, and take others off from that holy Care and Caution which is absolutely necessary to the Attainment of Life eternal: and doubtless this is that which encourages the looser Sort who are of this Perswasion, to do many unjustifiable things, upon Presumption that no Sin can damn the Elect. And 'tis worth observing here, that all do think themselves among the Number of the Elect, that do believe this Doctrine; and this makes great Numbers of them so remiss and careless as they are, for they are perswaded that before they die God will some way or other without their own Endeavours irresistibly sanctify them: hence it is that so many of them go on with so much Confidence and Comfort in a Course of Wickedness, than which nothing can be more unsafe and unsecure.

Of Universal Redemption.

The Predestinarians teach, that as God did not intend the Salvation of all Men, so neither did Christ die for all, so as to put all Men into a Capacity of obtaining Life eternal: but this Notion is contrary to Scripture, and for that Reason is undoubtedly false.

The

The Scripture tells us plainly that the Redemption by Jesus Christ was universal, that he gave his Life a Ransom for all, 1 Tim. 2. 6. that by the Grace of God he tasted Death for every Man, Heb. 2. 9. that he is the Propitiation for the Sins of the whole World, 1 Joh. 2. 2. that as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive, 1 Cor. 15. 22. that as by the Offence of one Judgment came upon all Men to Condemnation, so by the Righteousness of one the free Gift came upon all Men to Justification of Life, Rom. 5. 18. And 'tis evident that the Design of God in his sending of Christ was the Salvation of all; for God so loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believed in him, should not perish but have everlasting Life, Joh. 3. 16. and therefore 'tis said that to every one is given Grace, according to the Measure of the Gift of Christ, Eph. 4. 7. and that the Grace of God that brings Salvation, hath appeared unto all Men, Tit. 2. 11. that he is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to Repentance, 2 Pet. 3. 9. that he would have all Men to be saved, and come to the Knowledge of the Truth, 1 Tim. 2. 4.

Besides all this we find the Angel thus speaking to the Shepherds, *Fear not*, saith he, *for behold I bring you good Tidings of great Joy, which shall be unto all People; for unto you is born this Day in the City of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord*, Luke 2. 10, 11. And the Psalmist tells us, that the Lord is good to all, and his

tender Mercies are over all his Works, Psal. 145.

9. For which Reason he proclaims himself to be *the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long suffering, and abundant in Goodness and Truth*, Exod. 34.

6. Which universal Declarations of his Goodness do make it most evident, that the saving Intentions of God in Jesus Christ were extended to the whole World, God having thereby put all Men into a Capacity of being made Happy, if they will but do on their Part what he has commanded, and what he for the Sake of Christ has made them able to perform; and none can miss of Salvation but by their own wilful Neglect: *If they will not come to Christ that they may have Life*, the Fault is their own: *How shall we escape*, saith the Apostle, *if we neglect so great Salvation?* Heb. 2. 3.

Some I know are so senseless as to imagin that their Notion of particular Grace does magnify, and more exalt the Glory of God's free Grace, than it would be exalted, were the free Grace of God universally extended to all Men. But the Reason of every common Man will serve to confute this; for every one knows that he who contributes towards the making a thousand Persons happy, is much more good and gracious than he who is kind only to two or three: the Grace of God is never a whit the less free for its being extended unto all; but as for the Riches of the free Grace of God there's no Comparison to be made between that which is general and which is particular; for the more universally the Grace is extended,

extended, the more rich in all Respects it is: which shews that the Predestinarian Notion of God's intending to be gracious, through Jesus Christ, but to a few Men, to the utter Exclusion of all the rest, does but tend to eclipse the Glory of the free and undeserved Grace of God; and that which does so, must needs be an Error.

'Tis evident likewise that this Doctrine is an Error, from the Practice of those Preachers that profess it; for they often declare *that God hath committed unto them the Word of Reconciliation, and therefore as Ambassadors for Christ they pray the People in Christ's stead to be reconciled unto God, that so their former Trespases may not be imputed unto them,* 2 Cor. 5. 18, 19, 20. For, say they, as God has *commanded all Men every where to repent,* Acts 17. 30. so we have a Commission to *preach Repentance and Remission of Sins to all Nations* in the Name of Christ, Luke 24. 47. but at the same time you never hear them say, Beloved, don't think that by this we preach that cursed Doctrine of Universal Redemption by Christ, as if by what he has done for Mankind all were put into a new Capacity of obtaining Life eternal: no, we declare the contrary, that tho by us *God does command all Men every where to repent,* yet by his eternal Decree he has made it impossible for all those to repent which are not first elected: we may exhort you all to repent indeed, because we don't know who are elected, and who are not; but if there be none of the Elect among

you, our Exhortations will all be in vain; for the Non-elect cannot *come to Christ, that they may have Life*, tho he bids *all come that are weary and heavy-laden, that they may find Rest to their Souls*, Mat. 11. 29. No Man, I say, ever heard a Predestinarian Preacher speak thus; but thus they ought to speak, were their Practice answerable to the Principles which they hold: but their not doing so evidently shews that this Doctrine is repugnant to the true Office and Duty of a Minister, and for that very Reason ought by all Men to be rejected as an Error.

OF FREE-WILL.

The Predestinarians teach that God has not given unto Man such a Freedom and Power of Will, as does enable him either to do or not to do what he requires of him: for they say, that as one part of Men are reprobated, and the other are elected, so he will unavoidably make them righteous whom he decrees to save, and as unavoidably make them wicked whom he decrees to damn; for as God has decreed the End of Men, whether it be Salvation or Damnation, so he has decreed the Means that shall bring them thereunto: these things, say they, are not left to their own Choice, neither is it in their own Power to be that which God has not absolutely determined them to. But this Notion is contrary also to Scripture and Reason, and is therefore an Error.

The

The general Importance of the Scriptures does make it evident, that Man is a Being to whom God has given such Powers as do sufficiently enable him either to do the Will of God, or else to disobey it: and therefore we are exhorted to *give all Diligence to make our Calling and Election sure,* 2 Pet. 1. 10. and to *work out our Salvation with fear and trembling,* Phil. 2. 12. and to *labour to enter into that Rest,* Heb. 4. 11. and to *cleanse our selves from all Filthiness of Flesh and Spirit,* 2 Cor. 7. 1. and to *cast away from us all our Transgressions, and make us new Hearts and new Spirits,* Ezek. 18. 31. And to the same purpose St. James presses those to whom he wrote, saying, *Cleanse your Hands ye Sinners, and purify your Hearts ye double-minded,* Jam. 4. 8. All which do clearly imply that God has given Men a Power to do his Will, else he would not exhort them to do it as we see he has done; and if he exhorts all Men to do this, and yet they all do not do it, as we see they do not, this is a plain Proof on the other hand, that they have a Power to disobey.

And indeed the Divine Law of God is a clear and demonstrative Proof that the Will of Man is free; for it would be in vain to oblige Men by a Law to do one thing, and not to do another, if there were a natural Necessity that Men must do these things. As there is no place then, so neither is there any need of an Obligation, where there is no Liberty nor Power of Choice; but where Beings have a Power to act two different ways,

ways, in such a Case it is proper to give such Beings a Law to tie them up, or oblige them to act only one way: and for this Reason it is that among all the Creatures found in this lower World, Men alone are bound to the Observation of Laws, because no Creature beside is indowed with Freedom of Will, and Liberty of Choice.

Nothing doubtless can be more unreasonable than to believe that God should give a Law to Mankind, and expressly promise Rewards to them that will obey on the one hand, and on the other hand threaten Punishments to them that disobey, and yet believe withal, that he has eternally decreed whatsoever shall come to pass, so that it is not in the Power either of the Righteous or the Wicked to do otherwise than we see they do; or in other Words, that it is not in the Power of some to disobey so far as to damn themselves, nor in the Power of others to obey so far as is effectual for Salvation: for were it so that Men had no liberty or freedom of Choice in these Matters, there then would need no Law to forbid Men to do what is impossible they should do, or command the doing of that, which they unavoidably must do. Wherefore God's giving unto Man a Law, is a plain Demonstration that there is in him a Freedom of Will.

Hence the Lord God thus speaks unto *Israel*, See, I have set before thee Life and Death, Good and Evil. In that I command thee this Day to love the Lord thy God, to walk in his Ways, and

to k
his
thin
bea
ye
set
sing
See
Fro
God
bein
ther
to o
of t
plea
ces
tha
Dea
and
Dea
also
thou
of t
and
be
will
like
to
Afa
with
him
him

Some Principal Errors. 27

to keep his Commandments, and his Statutes, and his Judgments, that thou mayest live—but if thine Heart turn away, so that thou wilt not bear—I do denounce unto you this Day, that ye shall surely perish. And he adds—I have set before you Life and Death, Blessing and Cursing; therefore chuse Life, that both thou and thy Seed may live, Deut. 30. 15, 16, 17, 18, 19. From which Words we may inter safely, that God has laid upon Man no absolute Necessity of being either happy or miserable, but he deals with them as with Persons who have from him a Power to obey or disobey, as themselves (by the Power of those Faculties they have from him) do best please: only he tells them what the Consequences either of Obedience or Disobedience will be, that Life shall be the Reward of the one, and Death of the other; and withal, that his Desire and Will is that they should choose Life, and not Death. The Words of David unto Solomon do also plainly imply this free Agency of Man; And thou Solomon my Son, saith he, know thou the God of thy Father, and serve him with a perfect Heart, and willing Mind—If thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever, 1 Chron. 28. 9. as do likewise the Words of the Prophet Azariah unto Aza; And he said unto him, Hear ye me, Aza, and all Judah and Benjamin, The Lord is with you, while ye be with him; and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you, 2 Chron. 15. 2.

And

And we find accordingly that the Scriptures do most abundantly declare that both Vertue and Vice are the Effect of our own free Choice: and for this Reason we are commanded *not to envy the Oppressor, and that we should choose none of his ways*, Prov. 3. 31. And therefore *Mary* is said to have *chosen the good Part, which should never be taken from her*, Luke 10. 42. And it is also written, *Thus saith the Lord unto the Eunuchs, that — choose the things that please me — I will give them an everlasting Name*, Isa. 56. 4, 5. On the other hand it is said, *They did Evil before mine Eyes, and chose that wherein I delighted not*, Isa. 65. 12. *They have chosen their own Ways, and their Soul delighteth in their Abominations*, Isa. 66. 3. *Ye will not come to me, that ye might have Life*, Joh. 5. 40. *My People would not hearken unto my Voice, and Israel would none of me; so I gave them up to their own Hearts Lust*, Psal. 81. 11, 12. *They would none of my Counsel, they despised all my Reproof*, Prov. 1. 30. *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thee as an Hen gathereth her Chickens, and ye would not?* Mat. 23. 37. All which wholly lays the Guilt. of Sin upon the Sinner's Wilfulness; they chose to do ill, when they might have chosen to do well, as others did by virtue of those Powers which God had given them.

Hence 'tis said that *to whom ye yield your selves Servants to obey, his Servants ye are to whom ye obey, whether 'it be of Sin unto Death, or of Obedience unto Righteousness*, Rom. 6. 16. Which plainly implies

implies that 'tis our own voluntary Act that makes us Servants either to God or the Devil: as for God 'tis plain that he necessitates no Man to serve him; he gives to all Men a Power to obey his Will, but he will not force them to obey whether they will or no; he could force them to do so if he pleased, but his infinite Wisdom does not think it fit: yea, *should he do so, he would then deprive them of the Advantage of those Rewards which his Goodness has been pleased to promise to that true Love, which only can be manifested by a free and unconstrained Obedience.* But as for the Devil, his Power does not extend so far as to force any Man to do wickedly; he can tempt indeed, but he cannot necessitate: for *God is faithful, and will not suffer you to be tempted above what you are able,* 1 Cor. 10. 13. Do but resist him with that Ability that God has given thee, and *he will fly from thee,* Jam. 4. 7. Men do not sin for want of Power to do otherwise, but because they will not use the Power that God has given them. If God will not suffer us to be tempted above what we are able, then 'tis our willingly yielding to the Devil when we had Power to resist, that makes us the Subjects and Slaves of Sin.

'Tis manifest that every Man has a Power to do that which God has made him able to do; and God does not require more of any Man. *If there be a willing Mind, saith the Scripture, it is accepted according to what a Man hath, and not according to what he hath not,* 2 Cor. 8.

12. He that improved his two Talents was kindly accepted, as well as he that did improve his five Talents; see *Mat. 25*. Be sure to make the best Use that thou canst of the Powers that thou hast; and then if thy present Powers are not sufficient to enable thee to make thy own Calling and Election sure, God will not fail at last to give thee that Power that is sufficient: for he has made a Promise unto Men by the Mouth of our Blessed Lord, that more Grace shall be given to them that make a good Use of the Grace they have; *Unto every one that hath shall be given, saith he, and he shall have abundance; but from him that hath not, shall be taken away even that which he hath*: See *Mat. 25. 29*.

If the general Current of the Scriptures be considered, it will appear evident, that if Men make that use they ought of the Talent of Common Grace, or those general Indowments of Reason and Humanity, which all but Idiots do receive in some Measure from the Bounty and Goodness of God to them, he will be merciful in a greater Measure, by giving them such other Graces as shall fully enable them *to work out their own Salvation*: but from them that will not make that use they ought of Common Grace, he will withhold his Special Grace, or that Grace that is saving. And in so doing God is not to be blamed: *For why should the true Riches be committed to his Trust, that already has made a wrong Use of the unrighteous Mammon?* Hence then 'tis evident, that by Nature, which is from God, Men are able
to

to do that, which God has promised to bless with saving or supernatural Grace or Power.

There is, I know, a great Out-cry made against the Doctrine of Free-will, as if the Doctrine which asserts that Men have a Power from God, either to do or disobey his Will, were dishonourable to God, and did make Man's Strength greater than that of his Maker. But why should it be dishonourable to God to make Man a free Agent? All confess he made *Adam* so, and why should it be a Dishonour to him to say he has made us so too? As he certainly has, for we have as full a Power now to obey or not obey the Law of the second Covenant, which requires only Sincerity, as *Adam* had to obey or disobey the first Covenant, which did require sinless Obedience: and as for the Dishonour which some think is reflected on God, by saying that his Creatures have an Ability to disobey his Will, it will all vanish, if we consider that he may suffer this if he pleases, since he has a Right to do what he will with his own; and besides, the Superiority of his Power above Man's Power will sufficiently appear at length in that everlasting Punishment which he will eternally inflict on them that disobey. He may suffer Men to walk in their own Ways, Acts 14. 16. that he may prove them, as he did *Israel*, to know what is in their Heart; that he may do them good at their latter End: see Deut. 8. 2, 16. But they will have but little Cause to brag of their being able to resist him in this the time of their Probation,

bation, when for their so doing they shall be condemned to *dwell in everlasting Burnings.*

From what has been said hitherto, I think it is evident, that 'tis in every Man's Power to be as good, as the Use of those Natural Endowments which God has bestowed on every reasonable Man will admit of: for by the Use of the natural Endowment of five Talents, he may attain to eminent Degrees of Vertue and Perfection; and by the Use of the natural Endowment of two Talents, he may so far express Faithfulness in the Trust committed to him, as to obtain the Favour of a saving Reward from his Lord, tho in an inferiour Degree: for as the common Gifts of Men differ, so will the Rewards promised be proportional only to the Improvement, which the Gift they have does enable them to make: He that well improved his five Talents, was made Ruler over five Cities; and he that improved the two that were given him, was made Ruler over two Cities; and he that had one Talent given him, would have been made Ruler over one City, had he improved it as the others did. Hence the Reason of the different Degrees of Vertue among very good Men is evident. *Who maketh thee to differ?* is a Scripture-question. I answer, 'tis God that makes Men to differ, since that by Nature he endows one Man with better Abilities than another: but no Man has reason to complain of this, so long as he gives to every Man as much as will intitle him to an Interest in his saving Grace, if he improve it, as the Gift

Gift it self does enable him to do.

It is likewise evident from what has been said, that 'tis in every Man's Power to be wicked so far as to be worthy of Damnation, tho some have not abilities sufficient to be as wicked as others are: for as the Degrees of Vertue in Men are limited by the preventing Grace of God, so also the Degrees of Vice in Men are limited by his restraining Grace; and as a Man can't be better than the utmost Improvement of that Talent will admit of which is given him, so neither can he be more wicked than the restraining Grace of God will permit or suffer. But yet after all there is no necessity laid upon Man by God to be as bad as he can be; neither has he laid upon Man a Necessity of being as good as he may be: these are refer'd to his own Choice, and that Freedom of Will with which his most wise Creator has endowed him. And of the Truth of this almost every one's Experience and Conscience may fully convince him: for I believe there are very few who will be so disingenuous as to affirm, that it was not any-ways possible for them to have lived better and more holily than they have done, nor that it was impossible for them to have forborn any of those evil things which they know they have committed.

I will conclude this Head, by only asking the Predestinarians this Question; Suppose all Men should believe (as they may do if they will) that God has given them a Power *to work out their own Salvation*, provided they do work
C while

while an Opportunity to work is given them, that is to say in the present time, or *to Day*, for to Morrow their Lives may be taken away, and then all Opportunity is for ever at an end: should all, I say, believe this, and should all according to the Importance of this their Belief repent truly of their Sins, and by God's Grace become holy, just and sober Men; what hurt would accrue hereby either to the Glory of God, the Interest of Religion, or the Good of Souls? yea, they themselves cannot press Men to the Duties of Repentance and Holiness, without teaching the very Principles of them that do believe that the Will is free.

Of Falling from Grace.

The Predestinarian Doctrine in this Point is, that a Man who is once in a State of saving Grace, can never fall from it, or can never be in danger of Damnation by any Act of Sin which he shall afterwards commit: but this is an Error, because 'tis contrary to Scripture, which not only forewarns Men of the Danger, but declares expressly, that righteous Men may become wicked, and die in Sin; and 'tis also a Doctrine proper to give Men Peace and Comfort in a Course of Wickedness, and for that Reason ought to be rejected by all good Men.

In the first place then, the Scripture plainly forewarns good Men of the Danger; which shews that 'tis possible for good Men to fall from a State

of
left
Wi
3.
in
9.
in
reco
tinu
mov
21,
fort
Nov
dra
Heb
stan
take
run
did
Gal
S
righ
their
teou
com
Righ
in h
Sin
Eze
awa
quie
bath

of saving Grace. Beware, saith the Scripture, lest ye also being led away with the Error of the Wicked, fall from your own Steadfastness, 2 Pet. 3. 17. Let us not be weary in well-doing; for in due time we shall reap if we faint not, Gal. 6. 9. And you that were alienated, and Enemies in your Minds by wicked Works, yet now hath be reconciled—to present you blameless, if ye continue in the Faith, grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the Hope of the Gospel, Col. 1. 21, 22, 23. If a Man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a Branch, and is withered, Joh. 15. 6. Now the Just shall live by Faith; but if any Man draw back, my Soul shall have no Pleasure in him, Heb. 10. 38. Let him therefore that thinks he standeth (so fast as that no Sin shall move him) take heed lest he fall, 1 Cor. 10. 12. Ye did run well, saith St. Paul to the Galatians, who did hinder you that ye should not obey the Truth? Gal. 5. 7.

Secondly, the Scripture expressly declares, that righteous Men may become wicked, and die in their Sins: for 'tis said thus, that when the Righteous turneth away from his Righteousness, and committeth Iniquity—shall he live? all the Righteousness he hath done, shall not be mentioned; in his Trespas that he hath trespassed, and in his Sin that he hath sinned, in them he shall die, Ezek. 18. 24. When a righteous Man turneth away from his Righteousness, and committeth Iniquity, and dieth in them, for his Iniquity that he hath done he shall die, Ezek. 18. 26. And agree-

able hereunto are the Words of *David* to his Son *Solomon*; *And thou Solomon my Son, saith he, know thou the God of thy Father, and serve him with a perfect Heart, and with a willing Mind: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever, 1 Chron. 28. 9. It is impossible, saith the Author to the Hebrews, for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the Heavenly Gift, and were made Partakers of the holy Ghost, and the Powers of the World to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again to Repentance, Heb. 6. 4, 5, 6. Hence 'tis said of the younger Widows that were wanton, that they have Damnation, because they have cast off their first Faith, 1 Tim. 5. 12.*

Now these and such-like Scripture-Evidences are a plain and undeniable Proof that righteous Men may fall from a State of Salvation, and die in their Sins; and therefore the Doctrine which asserts the contrary, is certainly an Error.

Yea, 'tis a foul Error, because it gives Encouragement to Sin and Wickedness, since it asserts that no Sin can provoke God to withdraw his saving Grace from them that are once Saints: but such Presumption has doubtless ruined more Souls than deep Despair; for how are bad Men (as there are many of this Perswasion as well as of others) hereby encouraged to do ill things, when they shall be perswaded that no Sin can deprive them of God's Favour who are once inrol'd

inroll'd in the Book of Life? And 'tis evident that the Generality of both Good and Bad who believe this Doctrine, are so foolish as to think that they are all certainly of this Number, meerly because they profess themselves Predestinarians; and therefore they comfort up themselves with this Consideration, that tho they are guilty of some gross Sins, yet their Salvation is still safe, because their Names are written, as they think, in the Book of Life: than which no Doctrine in the World can be more proper to encourage Wickedness, nor can any thing be more contrary to Scripture, which expressly affirms thus, *Whosoever sinneth against me, him will I blot out of my Book*, Exod. 32. 33. Which shews that a Man may be in God's Book, and yet he may afterwards commit such Sins as shall blot him out of it.

'Tis not to be supposed that Men will much boggle at any Matter of worldly Advantage, when they are really perswaded that good Works are not concern'd in Justification: for they think that Justification is only the Fruit of Election, and not the Fruit of Obedience to God's Law; and that being elected, they are by Consequence justified before they are sanctified, or in a State of Grace before they are converted unto God; none being converted, they say, but those who are before in God's Love, by virtue of his Decree of eternal Election; and that after Conversion, which does only manifest their being elected, if they do happen to sin, and fall very

fouly, as *David* did, yet God still loves them as much under this their Relapse as he did before their first Conversion: and tho such Sins may bring upon them temporal Miseries, yet they shall never deprive them of eternal Glory; for they shall not die, till by an unresistible Power God has raised them up again by Repentance. They confess they may fall for a time, but their Fall shall not be final, nor end in Death eternal.

Men, I say, that believe all this, and believe withal that they themselves are of the Number of these elected Ones, as great Numbers do who have no other ground for their so doing but Self-confidence, and an erroneous Perswasion that so it is; these, I say, have a great deal of Encouragement not to boggle at such Opportunities and Actions, as others who really believe the contrary, dare not either take or do, for fear lest God should cut them off in their Sins, and damn their Souls; 'tis plain that such have not those Advantages of doing ill afforded them from their Faith as the others have, because they dare not do an ill thing, lest they should lose the Favour of God: they may sin by surprise, but they dare not sin presumptuously. But the other believes that there's no eternal Danger in it, because those whom God once loves, he loves to the end; and he will not so see Sin in his Elect as to damn them for it: and this they call a Doctrine full of Comfort and Consolation; and indeed it does in this respect equal that of the Papist;

Papist; for as a Papist's Sins do not much terrify him, because he believes the Priest can forgive him upon Confession, so neither can the other's, because he believes God will not take away his Life till he has brought him to Repentance.

That there are wicked Men among those who believe contrary to these Predestinarian Doctrines, I readily grant: but they have no Encouragement to be wicked from any natural Consequences that may be drawn from the Doctrines they believe; they are plainly self-condemned by their own Principles in all the Evils which they do allow themselves in. Some, I know, endeavour to perswade the World that the Doctrine of Free-Will does encourage Men to Wickedness, because they say it makes many think that if God has given Men a Power to repent when they will, that therefore they may sin as long as they please, and repent at last: but in this they are strangely mistaken; for tho we teach that Men who have not hardned their own Hearts by many repeated Acts of wilful and malicious Sins against God, may repent if they please at any time, yet we don't teach that Men can live as long as they please; and we know that when Life ceases, then the Opportunity of Repentance ceases also. God that promises Pardon whenever we sincerely repent, has not promised us a *To morrow* to repent in; and no Man who rightly believes that there is in Man a Free-Will, will be so mad to say, I will yet sin on one Week longer, and then repent, when for ought he knows his Death

may come this very Day, and prevent his so repenting.

Thus 'tis plain that no Free-willer, who truly understands the Nature of the Doctrine which he professes, can sin without being sensible of the Danger of Damnation; whereas the opposite Perswasion plainly infers, that Disobedience can never make void the Decree of God to save them that are elect, or in a State of Salvation, even in spite of their own resistance: so that 'tis evident a Predestinarian may sin with some Confidence and Comfort, but the Free-willer always sins under great Discouragement from his own Principles, there being in his Faith nothing that can yield him any Security in his so doing. I will conclude this Point by asking the Predestinarians this one Question, as I before have done under some of the other Heads; Suppose all Mankind that believe the Gospel, and endeavour to live up to it, should be perswaded that 'tis possible for those that are in a State of saving Grace to fall from it, and should they by virtue of this Perswasion be careful, through the Divine Assistance, *not to fall from their own Stedfastness*, 2 Pet. 3. a 7. nor *fail of the Grace of God*, Heb. 12. 15. and so live good and pious Lives; what hurt would this do either to the Interest of Religion, or the Good of Souls? Where is the Impiety or Perniciousness of such a Faith and Practice, that the Predestinarians should so long and so loudly exclaim against it? I am sure 'tis a Faith that all truly good Men practise, and which

Some Principal Errors.

41

which the Adversaries do themselves teach in all their Exhortations to a vertuous and godly Way of living.

Of the Period of Humane Life.

The Predestinarians teach likewise, that the Period of humane Life is unchangeably fixt by God, so that no Man can either live longer, or die sooner than he does : but this is also an Unscriptural Doctrine, as well as unreasonable, and therefore an Error.

The Scriptures do plainly imply that by Wickedness Men may cut their Lives short, and that by Righteousness Mens Lives may be prolonged. Thus 'tis said, *The Fear of the Lord prolongeth Days ; but the Years of the Wicked shall be shortened*, Prov. 10. 27. Again, *as Righteousness tendeth to Life, so he that pursueth Evil, pursueth it to his own Death*, Prov. 11. 19. Again, 'tis said, *Evil Doers shall be cut off ; but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the Earth*, Psal. 37. 9. Besides these Testimonies, 'tis evident, that in many Places of Scripture Wickedness is threatned with a short Life : thus 'tis said, *Bloody and deceitful Men shall not live out half their Days*, Psal. 55. 28. *Be not overmuch wicked, neither be thou foolish ; for why should'st thou die before thy time ?* Eccles. 7. 17. Long Life is also promised to Goodness and Vertue, as thus : *My Son, forget not my Law, but let thine Heart keep my Commandments : for length of Days*
and

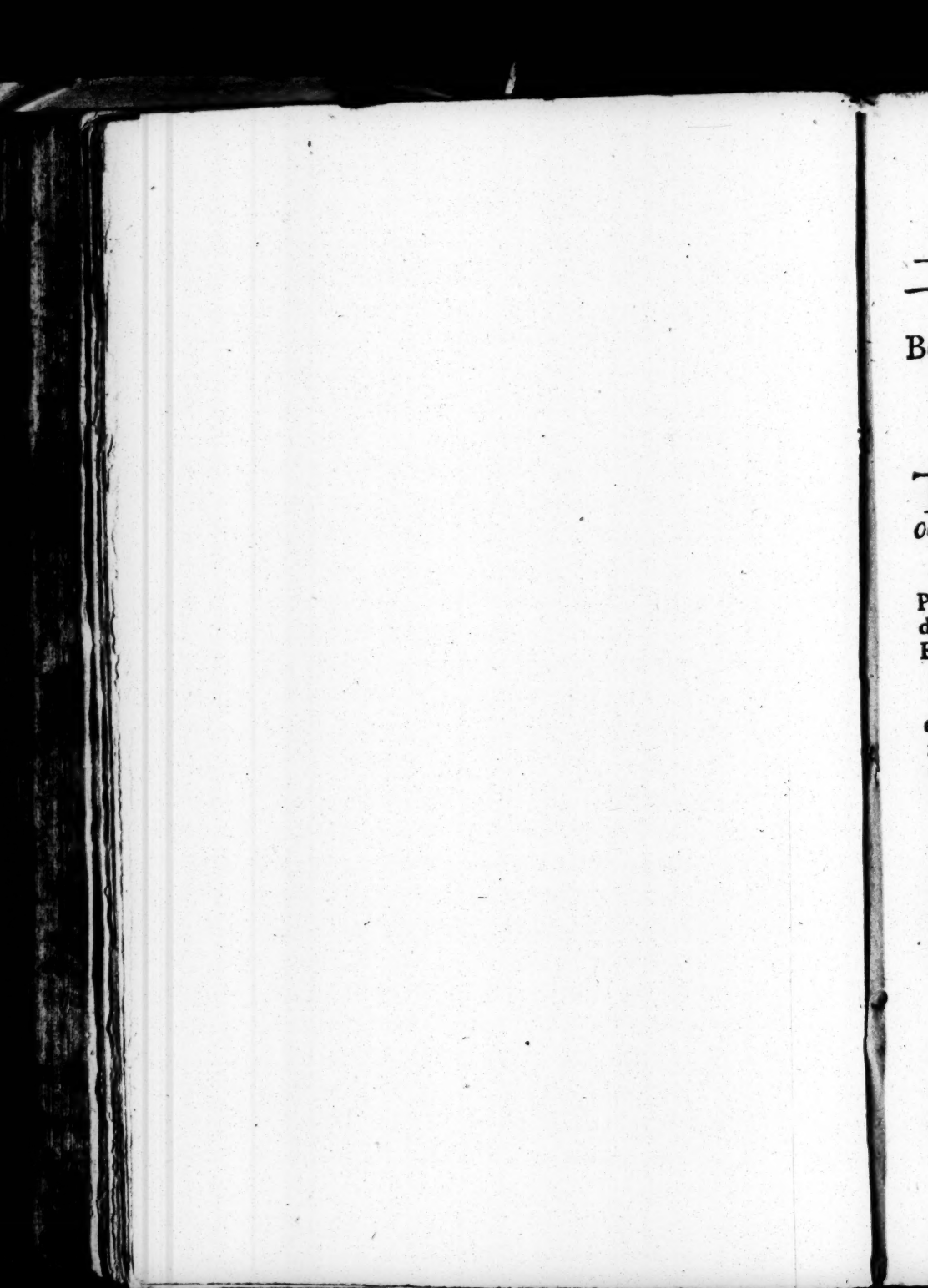
and long Life and Peace shall they add unto thee, Prov. 3. 1, 2. Because he hath set his Love upon me, therefore I will deliver him—with long Life will I satisfy him, and shew him my Salvation, Psal. 91. 14, 16. Happy is the Man that findeth Wisdom, and the Man that getteth Understanding—she is more precious than Rubies; and all things that thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her: length of Days is in her right Hand, and in her left Hand Riches and Honour, Prov. 3. 13, 15, 16. Hear, O my Son, and receive my Sayings, and the Years of thy Life shall be many, Prov. 4. 10. Honour thy Father and thy Mother, that thy Days may be long in the Land, Exod. 20. 12. Thus you see the Scriptures do plainly confute this foolish Notion.

And as the Scriptures confute it, so the universal Voice of Nature is against it, or that which we call the Law of Self-preservation; and indeed 'twould be utterly in vain to make Laws to punish common Murders, yea and King-killers too, with Death, if 'twere not possible for those that are so killed to live any longer: and to say that a Man that is executed upon a Gibbet for any Crime, should have died that very Moment, had he not done those things that brought him to the Gallows, is perfect Nonsense; and yet this must have been, if the Period of every Man's Life were so irrevocably fix'd, that he could neither live longer nor die sooner than he does. Besides, this Doctrine has been of pernicious Consequence to many, who in Sicknes out of a false

Per-

Perſwaſion that they ſhould not die before their time, as they call it, have neglected to ſeek the Means which by God are appointed to heal the deſtructive Infirmities of Nature ; and ſo they have died before they attained to that extent of Days which God has allowed unto Mankind, even that Period which ends with old Age, in which through a natural Decay of Strength we are rendered unable any longer to ſubſiſt.

And thus having gone through what I did intend to ſay on theſe ſeveral Heads, I ſhall conclude by only adding, that the Reason of my making this publick to the World is not out of ill-will to any Man's Perſon who does profeſs theſe Doctrines, but out of a Deſire to convince them all of their Error ; and that I may expreſs that ſincere Love and juſt Eſteem which I bear to many of this Perſwaſion, who in the Belief of ſo ill a Faith do yet live a ſober good Life ; hoping that hereby I may do ſome good to them for whom I have ſo great a Kindneſs, by thus endeavouring to perſwade them not to truſt on ſuch an unſecure Foundation as is that of the Doctrines herein confuted. Beſides all which it may poſſibly be that hereby divers contending Parties may be induc'd to a more eaſy Reconciliation as to the Matters in difference between them ; by which means the Peace and Unity of this Church may be advanced, which at this time is ſo neceſſary in order to the making us better able to reſiſt both the publick and private Enemies of this Proteſtant Church and Nation.



Books printed for *Richard Cumberland*,
at the Angel in *St. Paul's Church-*
Yard, 1696.

THe Government of the Thoughts, a prefatory Discourse to the Government of the Tongue. In *Octavo*. Price 1 s. 6 d.

Reform'd Devotions, in Meditations, Hymns, and Petitions, for every Day in the Week, and every Holiday in the Year. Divided into two Parts. The fourth Edition. Price 2 s. 6 d.

A brief and plain Exposition of the Church-Catechism, compos'd for the Use of a Private Shool; Erected and maintained at the Cost and Charges of several Charitable Persons belonging to the *New Church in Westminster*. By *Thomas Jekyll*, D. D. The second Edition. Price 9 d.

An Essay concerning friendly Reproof: explaining clearly the Nature, Excellency, and Usefulness of it. Proving both from Reason and Revelation, that it is an indispensable Duty: And laying down very plain Rules concerning the properest Methods, both of giving and receiving it, &c. Price 1 s. 6 d.

Serious Reflections on Time and Eternity; with some other Subjects moral and divine. To which is annex'd an Appendix concerning the first Day of the Year, how observed by the *Jews*, and may best be employed by a serious *Christian*. With an Exhortation to Youth to prepare for Judgment. The third Edition corrected and very much enlarged. Price 1 s. 6 d.

Sacra-

Books Printed for

Sacramental Discourses on several Texts, before and after the Lord's Supper; with a Paraphrase upon the Lord's Prayer. The second Edition. Both by Mr. *John Shower*. Price 1 s. 6 d.

The *Batchelor's Directory*: Being a Treatise of the Excellence of Marriage. Of its Necessity, and the Means to live happy in it. Together with an Apology for the Women against the Calumnies of the Men. The second Edition. Price 1 s. 6 d.

Horological Disquisitions concerning the Nature of Time, and the *Reasons* why all *Days*, from *Noon* to *Noon*, are not alike twenty four Hours long. In which appears the *Impossibility* of a Clock's being always kept exactly true to the Sun. With *Tables of Equation*, and newer and better *Rules* than any yet extant; how thereby precisely to adjust *Royal Pendulums*, and keep them afterwards, as near as possible to the apparent Time. With a *Table* of *Pendulums*, shewing the *Beats* that any Length makes in an Hour. A Work very necessary for all that would understand the true Way of rightly managing Clocks and Watches. By *John Smith*, C. M. To which are added, The best Rules for the Ordering and Use both of the *Quick-Silver* and *Spirit Weather-glasses*: And Mr. *S. Watson's* Rules for adjusting a Clock by the *Fixed Stars*. Price 1 s.

An Essay, for Regulating of the Coin: Wherein also is set forth, *first*, How we have lost that Import of Plate and Bullion we formerly had. *Secondly*, What is become of the great Quantities of Money coined in the Reign of King *Charles II.* and the preceding Reigns. *Thirdly*, The necessity there is at this Time for to rectify the present Coin of the Kingdom. *Fourthly*, By what Methods the Charge of calling in the present Money, and bringing it to a designed Standard, may be accomplished. *Fifthly*, Whether the Method proposed for the advancing of our Money (and the Bullion of which it's made)

Richard Cumberland.

made) be convenient or inconvenient for the Trade of the Nation. The second Edition, with an additional Proposition. By A. V. Price 6 d.

The Proposal for the Raising of the Silver Coin of *England*, from 60 Pence in the Ounce to 75 Pence, considered; with the Consequences thereof. Price 3 d.

Lately Published,

A Scriptural Catechism: Or, *The whole Duty of Man* laid down in express Words of Scripture, chiefly intended for the Benefit of the younger Sort. Divided into two Parts: The first containing the chief Principles of our Christian Belief. The second instructing us in our Duty to God and Man, according to the Method observed in the Excellent Book, intituled, *The whole Duty of Man*. To which is added, some private Devotions in express Words of Scripture: With devout Collects for several Occasions. Recommended by the Right Reverend Father in God, *Edward* Lord Bishop of *Gloucester*.

An Account of one *Ann Jefferies*, now Living in the County of *Cornwall*, who was fed for six Months by a small sort of Airy People call'd *Fairies*. And of the strange and wonderful Cures she performed with Salves and Medicines she received from them, for which she never took one Penny of her Patients. In a Letter from *Moses Pitt* to the Right Reverend Father in God Dr. *Edward Fowler*, Lord Bishop of *Gloucester*.

An Antidote against some Principal Errors of the Predestinarians. A Work designed for the Information of the Common People.

